(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of Government policy to ensure that imports to make food for poor school children fulfills all health checks in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) The proposal of CARE & CRS to import Corn Soya Blend (CSB) containing genetically modified (GM) material under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program through United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was considered by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) in its meeting held on 7th November, 2002. The GEAC noted that there are several GM corn varieties being cultivated in USA both for human consumption and animal feed. In view of the apprehension expressed by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and in the absence of any certification from the US regulatory agency to the effect that the CSB shipment does not contain the banned or obsolete variety of transgenic corn, the GEAC decided not permit the import of CSB.

(c) All food items imported into the country are checked as per the provisions of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 and shall be subject to all the conditions laid down in the aforesaid Act. Import of all these products will have to comply with the quality and packaging requirement laid down in the Act. For food having GM content, the GEAC evaluates the food and health safety aspects prior to its import.

Unauthorised cultivation of tobacco

1097. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Karnataka has sought Government's Intervention in regularizing the unathorized cultivation of tobacco;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the State Government has requested for raising the ceiling limit on the quantum of tobacco it can produce or to reduce the rate of levy on the encess production from 15 per cent to 2 per cent ;

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(e) whether Government propose to remove the ceiling on production

of tobacco by Karnataka considering that 80 per cent of its production is exported owing to the superior quality and inflow of foreign exchange?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) to (d) Government of Karnataka had sought Central Government's intervention for allowing registered and unregistered growers of Karnataka to sell their entire produce of Flue Cured Virginia tobacco by paying normal service charges during the crop season 2002-03 Government has allowed the registered growers to market their produce upto 55 million Kg under normal service charges. The unregistered growers have been allowed to market their produce of unauthorized tobacco by paying of Rs. 2/- per kg as extra fee plus 2 per cent of the sale proceeds of such tobacco as service charges.

(e) No, Sir.

EXPC's Offices in developed countries

1098. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU) : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Engineering Export Promotion Council is planning to expand its offices in other developed countries of Europe and America;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when said offices are likely to be functional?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Tea (Marketing) Control Order, 2003

1099. SHRI SK. KHABIR UDDIN AHMED: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that tea producers in the country are facing difficulties to sell their produces due to introduction of a new provision in Tea (Marketing) Control Order, 2003 resulting in the closure of many tea estates; and

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to take in this regard?